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CIA Control Sparks Angry Senate Debate

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For the first time in a decade the Senate debated yesterday the question of whether to impose tighter congressional supervision over the super-secret operations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The clash came as a prelude to a showdown vote today in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a proposal to add three of its members to the Senate's present six-man CIA review panel. The resolution is sponsored by Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.).

Sen. Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.), a staunch congressional patron of the agency, denounced as "sheer poppycock" claims that the CIA wields strong influence over foreign policy.

"There is no justification whatever for any other committee to muscle in on the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committee so far as the CIA is concerned," Russell told the Senate.

Russell is chairman of the special CIA subcommittee, which is comprised of three members each from Armed Services Committee, which Russell also heads, and the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Georgia Democrat praised his subcommittee as leak proof.

In answering Russell, Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) asserted: "I think in many countries it (the CIA) is more influential than our ambassadors, and I have had ambassadors who have told me this."

Fulbright added that "the way things have developed in the world has brought the CIA into far more activities than was contemplated when it was created."

Although the CIA was conceived as a top-secret foreign intelligence agency, such celebrated incidents as Francis Gary Powers' ill-fated U-2 flight in 1960, the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and the Dominican intervention last year made unfavorable headlines

for the agency—and roiled its relations on Capitol Hill.

McCarthy's proposal to add three Foreign Relations Committee members to the Russell group is supported chiefly by Senators who fear that the agency exercises too much influence on American policy.

It was to these critics that Russell answered yesterday: "It is sheer poppycock to say the CIA makes foreign policy."

Last Thursday the McCarthy resolution won a test vote in the Foreign Relations Committee with the defeat of a tabling motion by an 11-to-6 vote. Final action was deferred until today.

During yesterday's debate Russell dramatically argued that public discussion of the CIA might cause its secret sources "to close up like a clam for fear that something might happen that would cause a leak, that would identify them and cause them to lose their positions or, worse than that, to lose their lives."

Russell was supported by four members of his CIA subcommittee — Sens. Leverett Saltonstall (R-Mass.), John Stennis (D-Miss.), Milton Young (R-Neb.) and Stuart Symington (D-Mo.).

Among those who backed Fulbright in the clash were Sens. Ernest Gruening (D-Alaska), Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) and Albert B. Gore (D-Tenn.).

Gruening pointed to the Bay of Pigs as an example of CIA foreign policy-making. "They were able to persuade two Presidents to go ahead with that project," he said.

Morse expressed fear of

"the growing power" of both the CIA and the military in forming foreign policy.

The debate yesterday strikingly paralleled a similar outburst 10 years ago when Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) now the Majority Leader, and 32 other Senators sponsored a resolution to establish a 12-man joint committee on the Central Intelligence Agency.

Russell then argued: "It would be more desirable to abolish the CIA and close it up, lock, stock and barrel, than to adopt any such theory as that all the members of the Congress of the United States are entitled to know the details of all the activities of this farflung organization."

The Mansfield resolution was defeated in 1956. Yesterday the Montana Democrat took no part in the debate.